Rs. 64 crores respectively. The export data for May, June and July 1993 are not yet available.

Hike in the price of Gold

3725. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gold prices during the month of May, 1993 and June, 1993 have risen very high;

(b) if so, whether the liberal action of gold import policy in 1992 budget has not reduced the prices;

(c) if so, whether earlier the gold prices had declined but have again increased; and

(d) if so, what are the main reasons for this increase?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (d) Since the domestic supply of new Gold is negligible, the gold price in the country is largely influenced by the price quoted in the London Market. During 1991, the difference between the domestic price was substantial. With the introduction of the gold import policy, the domestic price of gold showed a downward trend thereby reducing the difference between the domestic price and the London price. However since the London price shot up after reaching a seven year low during the first quarter of this year, the effect of the same is reflected by the increase in the domestic price.

Processing of Cases by Settlement Commission (IT&WT)

3726. PROF. I.G. SANADI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the applications received by the Settlement Commission (IT&WT), Department of Revenue, Lok Nayak Bhawan, New Delhi are not admitted for being proceeded with further for settlement on the basis of date of receipt of the application or date of completion of formalities; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons in details and what other Criteria is being adopted by the Commission for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Ordinarily, settlement applications are processed for admission in their chronological order, except in the following categories of cases:

(i) Settlement applications are taken up for admission out of turn in a case or in a group of cases where the aggregate additional tax offered in the application is Rs. 10 lakhs or more. This ensures timely collection of additional tax in big cases which is to be paid within 35 days of the service of the order admitting a case.

(ii) Where in a group of cases some settlement applications filed on a particular date are taken up for processing as per chronology, the other applications in the same group filed on a later date are also taken up simultaneously for consolidated and coordinated disposal of the entire group of cases.

Similarly, in a case where settlement applications for certain assessment years filed on a particular date are taken up for processing as per chronology, the settlement applications for certain other assessment years filed on a later date in the same case are also taken up simultaneously for consolidated and coordinated disposal of applications for different years.

States of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal

3727. PROF. I.G. SANADI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal of his Ministry;

(b) whether it is a fact that if an appeal in a case is pending before the Tribunal, any other Commission of other Ministry i.e. Income Tax Settlement Commission, can consider an application in the same case; and

(c) if not, the action which can be taken under the rules/laws against the Commission, which considers such application in a case, which is pending before aforesaid Tribunals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, which is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Law & Justice, is a statutory Tribunal constituted under section 252 of the I.T. Act, 1961.

(b) It is legally permissible for the Settlement Commission (Income-tax) to admit an application, although an appeal in the matter is pending with Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, if such an appeal was pending with an Income Tax Authority on the date of filing of the application.

(c) Does not arise.

सरकारी विभाग में वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के पदों में कमी किया जाना

3728. **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव** : क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने 1992 में विभिन्न मंत्रालयों में कार्यरत वरिष्ठ स्तर के उच्च अधिकारियों के पदों में कमी करने का निर्णय लिया था, यदि हां, तो उक्त निर्णय कब से लागू किया गया है ;

(ख) इस निर्णय के फलस्वरूप वर्ष 1992 और 1993 के दौरान विभागवार अधिकारियों के कितने पद कम किए गए ;

(ग) वर्ष 1993-94 में किन-किन विभागों में किन-किन पदों में कमी किए जाने का प्रस्ताव है ; और

(घ) वर्ष 1992-93 और 1993-94 में विभागवार नए वरिष्ठ स्तरीय उच्च पदों के सृजन से सम्बन्धित ब्यौरा क्या है।

वित्त मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री एम० वी० चन्द्रशेखर मूर्ती) : (क) दिसम्बर, 1991 में राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद में प्रधान मंत्री की घोषणा को मद्देनजर रखते हुए भारत सरकार में वरिष्ठ स्तर के पदों में कमी करने की कार्रवाई की गई है।

(ख) से (घ) सूचना एकत्र की जा रही है तथा सभापटल पर रख दी जाएगी।

Allegations against SBI Officers

3729. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Jan Sampark Ki Aar Mein Ghaple Hi Ghaple" which appeared in the Jansatha of 23rd March, 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the names and designations of officers of the State Bank of India against whom allegations have been made in the news-item;

(d) what is the nature of allegations made the therein;

(e) whether any responsibility has been fixed in this matter;

(f) whether any action has been taken against the guilty officers of the State Bank of India;

(g) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(h) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (h) The State Bank of India has reported that the news-paper report contained allegations against the Assistant General Manager (Public Relations) of State Bank of India to the effect that the